

## POSTURAL ASSESSMENT

(Massachusetts Department of Public Health postural screening manual)

### Why do the screening?

Nine out of ten young people have completely normal spines. In most others, a curve in the spine is usually mild and does not get worse. Those curves that do get worse may result in medical problems, pain, and obvious physical deformity if not treated. The best prevention for this condition is a postural screening once a year between the ages of 10-14 (period of rapid growth).

Table D-1: Frequently Asked Questions About Postural Screening	
<b>"Curvature-of-the-Spine"</b>	<u>KYPHOSIS</u> or <u>ROUNDBACK</u> : a curve in the spine from front to back.
	<u>SCOLIOSIS</u> : a side-to-side curve; most often needs treatment
<i>What causes it?</i>	The cause is unknown, but it is not contagious. It is not preventable and sometimes runs in families. Girls need treatment more often than boys.
<i>Can you feel it?</i>	It can be difficult to see and feel it during the early stages.
<i>How is it treated?</i>	Most people with a mild curve will only need medical observation.
	If the curve grows worse, a back brace is worn until bone growth stops. This does not limit most activities.
	Special exercise may also be included.
	In extreme cases, spinal surgery is performed.
<i>What if it is not treated?</i>	It is possible that medical problems will occur later in life including obvious physical deformity, pain and arthritic symptoms, and/or heart and lung disorders.
<b>How is the screening done?</b>	A postural screening is a simple 30 second observation of the back: first standing, then bending forward. Screeners look for any unevenness of shoulders, hips, or one side of the back. Shirts are removed for better viewing.

**REFER IF ANY 2 OUT OF 3 PRESENT**

**A. Shoulder**

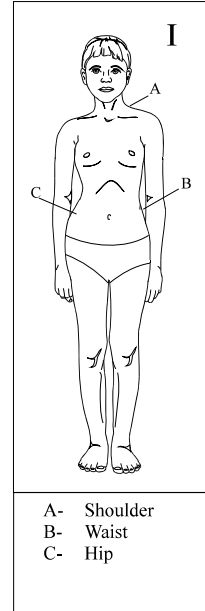
Is one shoulder higher than the other?

**B. Waist**

Is the waistline the same on both sides or is there a larger space between the arm and flank on one side?

**C. Hip**

Are the hips level and symmetrical or is one side higher and more prominent?



**REFER IF ANY 3 OUT OF 5 PRESENT**

**A. Head**

Does the head line up over the crease in the buttocks or does it lean to one side?

**B. Shoulder**

Is one shoulder higher than the other?

**C. Scapula**

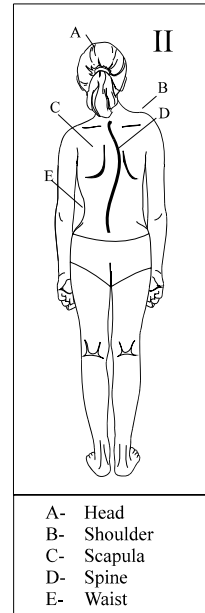
Is the wing on one shoulder blade higher or more prominent than the other?

**D. Spine**

Does there appear to be a curve when you observe the spine?

**E. Waist**

Is the waistline the same on both sides or is there a larger space between the arm and flank on one side?



**REFER IF EITHER PRESENT**

**A. Roundback**

Is there an exaggerated roundness in the upper back?

**B. Sway Back**

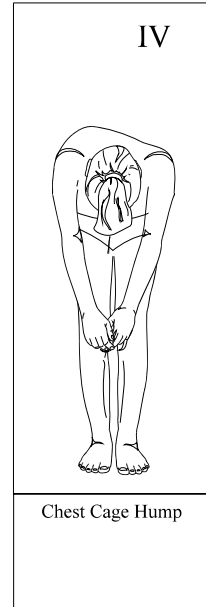
Is there an exaggerated arch in the lower back?



**REFER IF PRESENT**

**Chest Cage Hump**

Are both sides of the back symmetrical or is the chest cage prominent or bulging on one side?



**REFER IF PRESENT**

**Spine Hump**

Is there an accentuated midline hump?

